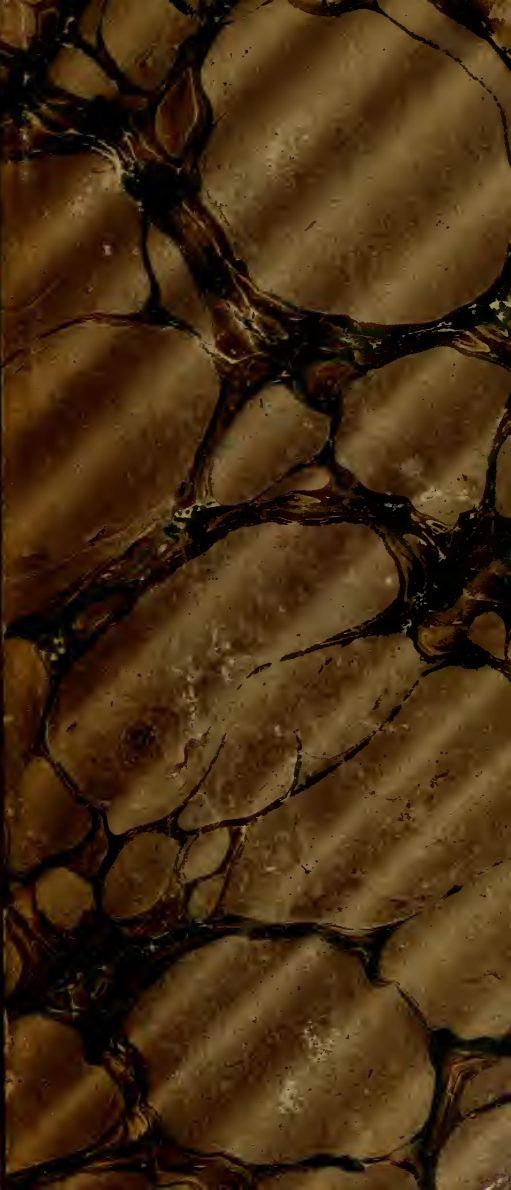

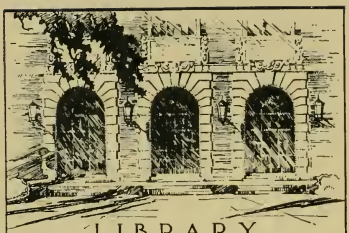

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A

PASTORAL LETTER

ON THE PROPOSED

MISSION AT LINCOLN,

February 19—27, 1876.

BY THE BISHOP OF LINCOLN.

LINCOLN:
JAMES WILLIAMSON, HIGH STREET.

Price One Half-penny, or 4s. per hundred.

TO THE INHABITANTS OF LINCOLN.

Dearly beloved in the Lord,

It is proposed to hold a Mission at Lincoln in the month of February next, February 19–27; and, in conjunction with my brethren the Clergy I earnestly invite your help in endeavouring to make it effectual.

The word *Mission*, used in this sense, seems to require explanation. A *Missionary* means one who is *sent*. Every clergyman is a missionary; he is sent by Christ to every soul committed to his care.

Again, in popular language, a *Mission* is usually applied to the preaching of the Gospel to the *heathen*. But Lincoln has enjoyed the blessings of Christianity for many centuries; it has many ministers of the Gospel, many places of religious worship, many Christian schools, and almost everyone there either has, or may have, a Bible. A Mission at Lincoln is not like the mission of the prophet Jonah to Nineveh, but rather like the preaching of Jeremiah, or of Ezekiel,—or even of Christ Himself and His Apostles,—to Jerusalem.

The first thought, therefore, suggested by a mission to Lincoln, is one of solemn responsibility. Suffer me, then, to ask, brethren—*What* fruit is Lincoln bringing forth of the spiritual benefits which have been vouchsafed to it for many generations? What is its present state as to Christian faith and Christian practice? What is its religious condition generally, as to temperance and sobriety, purity, chastity, and "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord?" (Heb. xii. 14.) What as to honesty, probity, and integrity? What as to charity and brotherly love, which are

indispensable requisites for acceptance with God? (1 Cor. xiii.) We know from our future Judge, that it will "be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon," and even "for Sodom and Gomorrha at the Day of Judgment," than for those who have heard the Gospel, and who live godless lives. (Matt. x. 15; xi. 21; Luke x. 13.) Unless we believe and obey the Gospel, we may read in the miserable fate of Jerusalem, a prophecy of our own destiny for Eternity.

Ought not the Mission at Lincoln to be a season to us all of self-humiliation and penitential shame and sorrow for the past, and of godly resolutions for the future? Ought it not to be a season of prayer for pardon, and for grace?

In February next almost every parish in Lincoln will have its missioner or missioners. Let us thank God for it. But believe me, brethren, the principal part of a Mission is not the missioner: nor is the Mission-week the main thing in the work of a Mission. No: the labour of the Mission-week will be fruitless, unless you are willing to do your part. I speak both to clergy and laity. The Mission-week is the seedtime, but there must be much careful preparation of the ground for it, and much watchfulness after it. Unless this is the case, the missioner may produce a little temporary religious excitement, but that excitement will soon pass away, and will be succeeded by apathy and indifference. It will be only like a fever-fit, followed by an ague.

What then is to be done?

First, let each of you be a missioner to himself; have an "enquiry room" in your own heart; set up a confessional there; test your own faith and practice by the only unerring standard, that of God's Holy Word. Do you believe in the never-ending life to come? Are you

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acting in that belief? Do you realize God's omnipresence and omniscience? In your daily business—in the street, the shop, and the mart—in the social meeting and domestic circle, as well as in your secret chamber, are you conscious of His all-seeing Eye, and, do you think often of death, judgment, heaven, hell, and eternity? Do you pray to God daily? Do you read His Word daily? If not, begin now; and not only this, be a missioner to your household, to your children, to your servants. Have you family prayer? If not, begin now. Are you an employer of labour? Be a missioner to those who are helping you to be rich in this world; care for their souls; enable and encourage them to come to the Mission; thus they will assist you to be rich for Eternity.

Brethren, the Mission is for us all. Every one may profit by it. There is no one who ought to stand still; our life is a battle, a race. Even with the holiest among you, acts of faith and love may be made more frequent and fervent. We are all "members one of another" (Ephes. iv. 25). "None of us liveth to himself, and no one dieth to himself" (Rom. xiv. 7.) It was the first murderer, Cain, who said, "Am I my brother's Keeper?" (Gen. iv. 9.) *You are* your brother's keeper. No one can be saved who cares little if his neighbour is lost. The best way to save ourselves is to try and save others. What was the use of the angel coming down to stir the waters of Bethesda, unless there were friends of the sick to put them into the pool? (John v. 4—7.) The paralytic in the Gospel would not have been cured, unless there had been loving hands to carry him up to the house top, and to let him down in the presence of Christ. (Mark ii. 4; Luke v. 18.) What will be the use of the missioner, unless you help the Mission? The worldly-minded,

the profligate and the libertine, the sceptic and unbeliever, will not come of their own accord to Church and to the Mission. Be you a missioner to them—"Go out into the highways and hedges, the streets and lanes of the city, and compel them to come in" (Luke xiv. 23.) Tell them that the wages of sin is Death (Rom. vi. 23), that the hour is coming when all that are in the graves will hear the voice of the Son of God, and will come forth, to be judged according to their works (John v. 28); and that He will be revealed in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel; and that they will be punished with everlasting destruction (2 Thess. i. 7.) But tell them also that there is rest for the weary and heavy laden in Christ (Matt. xi. 28); tell them that there is "a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness" there (Zech. xiii. 1); tell them that "if we walk in the light as He is in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7); tell them that there is perfect pardon and peace—infinite and eternal—in Him, and in Him alone, to all who truly turn to Him with faith and repentance, and sincere purpose of amendment of life. Tell them that He tasted death for every man (Heb. ii. 9); that whosoever cometh to Him He will in no wise cast out (John vi. 37); and there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth (Luke xv. 7.) Thus the fallen may be raised, the doubting may be settled in the faith, the erring may be reclaimed, the sinner may be saved, by your means, and you will have the inexpressible joy at the great Day of seeing the fruit of your own work in the Mission, in their everlasting bliss.

Remember also, brethren, that the love of the good Samaritan was shewn, not only by going to the wounded traveller lying in the road, and by pouring in oil and

wine, but by setting him on his own beast, and bringing him to the inn, and taking care of him and providing for him afterwards (Luke x. 33–35)—"Go and do thou likewise." I speak both to clergy and laity. Not only pour in the wine and oil of Christ's blood and of spiritual grace, into the sinner's wounds, but bring him to the inn of Christ's Church; take care of him there; provide, according to your means, for his spiritual maintenance there, by liberal alms-giving to works of piety and charity, in the building and endowing of churches, and in all that is requisite for the care of sick souls, not only after the Mission is over, but after your own departure from this life to a better.

But, further, brethren, the missioner may preach, and you may work, but all will be profitless except the Holy Spirit guides and helps both him and you. Paul may plant, Apollos may water, but it is God Who gives the increase (1 Cor. iii. 6). The seed is sown, but it cannot take root, and grow, and bear fruit, without the sunshine, dew, and rain of the Holy Spirit from above. The Holy Ghost is given to earnest prayer (Luke xi. 31). Pray, therefore, for the gift of the Holy Ghost; pray for it in the name of Christ; pray for it now; pray for it during the Mission; pray for it after the Mission. You will find, at the end of this letter, some prayers for the Mission, which may be added to your private and household devotions.

Brethren, beloved in the Lord, the first Mission of which we read in the Christian Scriptures, after the Ascension of Christ and the Coming of the Holy Ghost, is contained in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Let me invite your careful attention to it. It is like a picture, drawn by a divine hand, of what a Mission ought to be. There we see a fearless and fervent missioner, St. Peter, standing up boldly

and preaching Christ to those who had lately crucified Him. Many were converted by his preaching, and they who were converted were baptized (Acts ii. 41). Observe what follows: "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Believe me, that the real fruit of a Mission is not in sudden emotions, and violent ejaculations, and vehement professions, and passionate ecstacies and raptures; it is not in fanatical rhapsodies, nor even in a few fitful acts of piety or charity (which may be like the sudden growth of Jonah's gourd, or of the seed which fell on the rock and sprang up hastily, and was soon scorched and withered by the sun); but it is to be seen in "patient continuance in well-doing" (Rom. ii. 7) in the midst of trial and difficulty. "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved (Matt. xxiv. 13). It is to be seen in soundness and steadfastness of faith; it is to be seen in the "work of faith and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father" (1 Thess. i. 3); it is to be seen in unity and fellowship in apostolic doctrine and discipline, in prayer and praise, and in the habitual devout reception of the Holy Communion. Remember the concluding words of that Scriptural record of the first Mission: "The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved" (Acts ii. 47). The fruit of that Apostolic Mission was seen long after St. Peter's voice had ceased to be heard; it was seen in distant lands, and in succeeding ages; it increased far and wide, and it abides even to this day; it was seen in bringing men nearer to one another and to God in the Church of Christ; and thus it prepared them and qualified them by His grace ministered to faithful and loving hearts in the holy offices of the Church on

earth, to dwell together for ever in the Church glorified in heaven.

The results of a successful Mission will be visible long after the Mission is over. They will appear in fuller churches, and more frequent baptisms, more reverent confirmations, and more devout communions; they will be seen among all classes of society, in larger abundance of the fruits of the Spirit, which are "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. vi. 22).

That such fruits as those may be seen at the great Day of Harvest to have been produced largely by the Mission at Lincoln, is the earnest prayer of your faithful brother and servant in the Lord,

C. LINCOLN.

Riseholme, Lincoln,
Tuesday before Advent, 1875.

[OVER.

PRAYERS FOR THE MISSION AT LINCOLN.

MOST merciful Father, we beseech Thee to send upon Thy Ministers Thy heavenly blessing, especially on the Missioners of this city; that they may be clothed with righteousness, and that Thy Word spoken by their mouth may have such success that it may never be spoken in vain; and grant that in all our words and deeds we may seek Thy glory, and the increase of Thy kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O LORD JESU CHRIST, the Great Shepherd of the Sheep; look with pity on the populous places of this land, especially on this city; Bring into the way of truth all that err and are deceived; Awaken those who are in sin; Arouse the careless; Humble the proud and unmerciful; Cheer the fearful and sorrowful; Raise up them that fall; Heal the broken-hearted; Give them true repentance, faith, fear, and love, and so sanctify them with Thy grace that they may come to Thy heavenly glory, through Thy merits and mediation, Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost one God blessed for ever. *Amen.*

ALMIGHTY GOD, Whose strength is perfected in our weakness, from Whom are the preparations of the heart, and Who dost create the fruit of the lips; Who didst promise to be with the mouth of Thy servant Moses, and didst touch the lips of Isaiah with sacred fire, Who didst sanctify Jeremiah and John the Baptist from their mother's womb, and didst reveal Thyself in glory to the holy Prophet Ezekiel; Who didst call David from the sheepfold, and Elisha from the field, and Amos from the herd, to be Prophets; and Andrew and Peter from their nets, and Matthew from the seat of custom, to be Apostles; and Luke the beloved Physician to be an Evangelist and Physician of the soul; Who didst send down tongues of fire on the heads of the Apostles, to teach them and lead them to all truth, giving them boldness, with fervent zeal, to preach the Gospel to all nations; Raise up, we pray Thee, Thy power and come among us, and with great might succour us; pour out Thy Spirit upon us, and send forth men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, mighty in the Scriptures, able ministers of the New Testament; workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth; able and willing to endure afflictions, to do the work of evangelists, and to make full

proof of their ministry; and upon the seed of Thy Word sown by them pour down, O Lord, the continual dew of Thy heavenly blessing, that it may take fruit downwards and bear fruit upwards, to Thy honour and glory, and to a joyful ingathering of a spiritual harvest of souls to glorify for ever Thy holy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O GOD the Father of lights, from Whom cometh every good and perfect gift, we praise Thee for the light of the Gospel, which Thou hast given and preserved to us for many generations; we humble ourselves before Thee for the unthankfulness of our hearts, and for the unfruitfulness of our lives; and we pray Thee to pardon us by Thy mercy, and to quicken us by Thy grace, so that we, who have freely received that blessed gift from Thee, may freely help to impart it to all who are in darkness and in sin; and that hereafter we together with them may rejoice in the everlasting light of Thy heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Prayer for Unity.

O GOD the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace; Give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union and concord: that, as there is but one body and one spirit, and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of Truth and Peace, of Faith and Charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

OUR FATHER, which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil; For Thine is the kingdom, The power and the glory, For ever and ever. *Amen.*

THE grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

James Williamson, Printer, High Street, Lincoln.